

# LIVERPOOL METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL CHOIR



*Joining the Choir in 2024*

## *A message from the Archbishop of Liverpool*

Each Sunday at Mass we sing the song of the angels ('Glory to God in the highest') and the song of the heavenly chorus (Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of hosts). Singing is an important part of our Catholic tradition: indeed, Saint Augustine said, 'To sing is to pray twice'.

We are fortunate at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral to have choirs leading music in the liturgy on a daily basis. It is through their ministry of music that many people who enter the cathedral come to know the beauty of God.

Being a chorister is a unique opportunity for a young child in our Archdiocese. It is an opportunity to engage with music, learn more about the Catholic Faith and bring joy and hope to many.

The high musical standards that the choir achieves on a daily basis do not happen without sacrifice: many hours are spent in rehearsal, and liturgies take place each day. But for those who are fortunate enough to have the experience of being a chorister, it is indeed a life-shaping one.

I commend you to consider the opportunity for your child to become a chorister at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral.

Yours in Christ,

✠ **Malcolm McMahon OP**  
*Archbishop of Liverpool*



## **Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral Choir**

The choir of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral offers boys and girls the very best musical education along with unique opportunities to take part in numerous liturgies, concerts, tours and broadcasts on radio and TV.

Being a chorister provides a unique musical education, and opens up a world of new experiences.

We are looking for boys and girls who:

- have a passion for singing;
- enjoy working as a team;
- want to excel on a daily basis;
- will be ambassadors for the cathedral, the choir school and the city;
- want to experience other places and cultures on tours;
- are fully committed to the demanding lifestyle of a chorister;
- will fulfil all chorister obligations, both within the choir and by being a leading musician within our choir schools;
- will enjoy a musical challenge that will set them up for life!

## **Equality of opportunity**

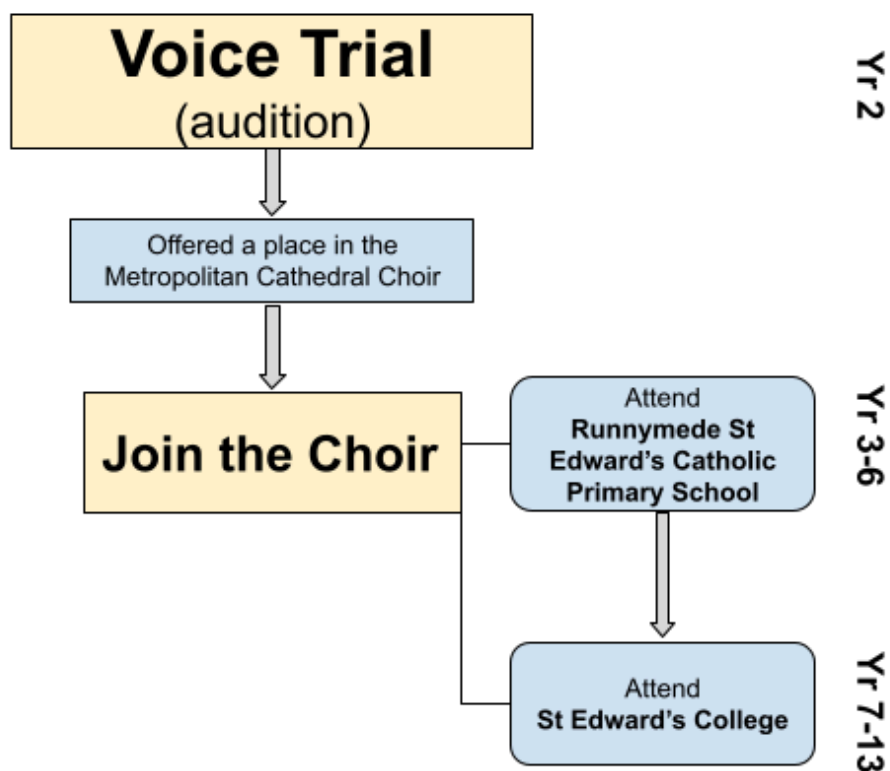
The Metropolitan Cathedral, in partnership with its choir schools (Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School and St Edward's College) strongly believe in offering both boys and girls the same opportunities in the Cathedral Choir.

From September 2023, for the first time, both boys and girls were admitted into the choir in Yr 3. (Girls have previously been admitted only in Yr 6.)

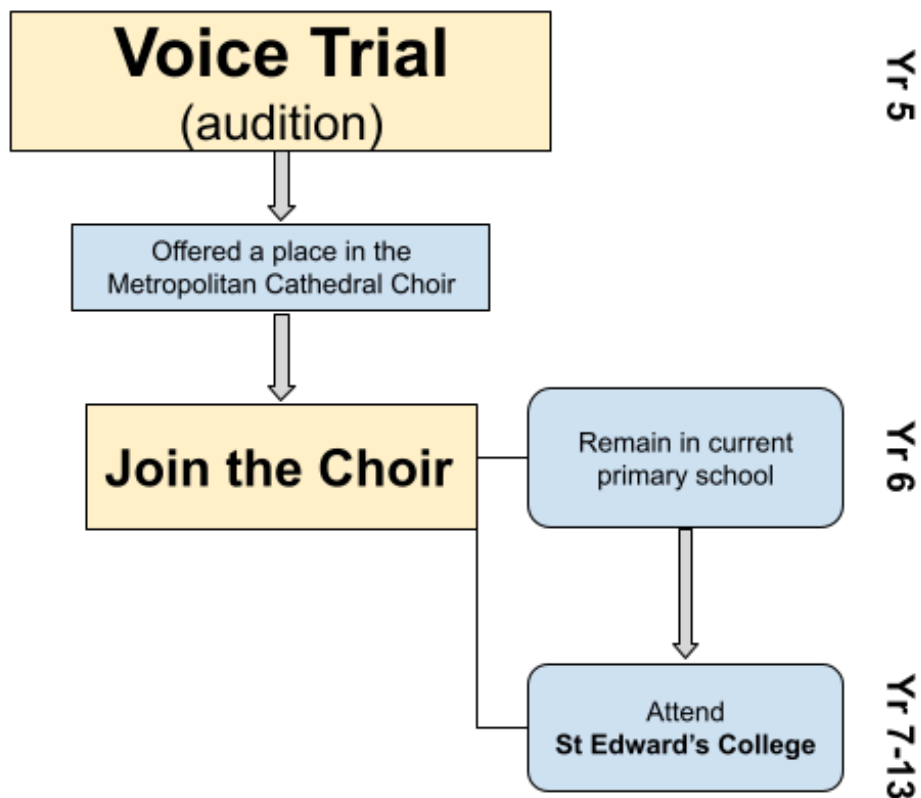
The Metropolitan Cathedral is the only RC Cathedral in the UK to offer a full cathedral chorister experience, including a place at a choir-school, to both boys and girls from age 7 to 18.

During a period of transition, girls will be admitted into the choir in both Yr 3 and Yr 6. From 2025 girls will be exclusively recruited into the choir to begin in Yr 3.

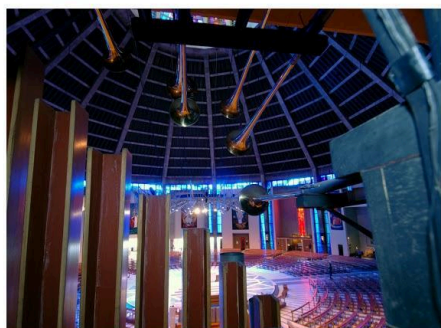
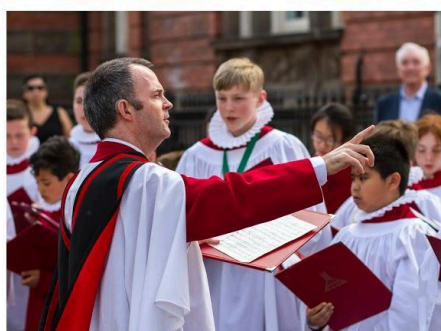
## Entry Routes for choristers



During a period of transition (2023-2025) girls will also be admitted as follows:



In exceptional circumstances, when a chorister place is vacant, voice trials may take place in other year groups. These will be advertised on the cathedral website.



*I owe my entire career to my experience as a chorister. My background in choral music has meant everything to me. It's a fantastic grounding in music but it's a discipline as well. I think you learn gravitas as a chorister, there's a great dignity to it. It brings you into contact with a colossal range of literature, it's very good for your maths, it's a grounding in performance. Any child who has been a chorister is destined to have an interesting and fulfilling life.*

Alexander Armstrong, TV and Radio presenter

## **What are the benefits of being a cathedral chorister?**

Choristers become used to working to the highest standards in all that they do on a daily basis. Skills that they learn in choir activities are very much transferable, such as:

- self-discipline, organisation and responsibility;
- time management and teamwork;
- the ability to concentrate for prolonged periods;
- reading and singing in a variety of languages;
- striving for excellence on a daily basis.

Musically, all choristers receive theory and vocal tuition, providing them with skills that will be of great benefit beyond their time in the choir.

The vast majority of choristers go on to study music at GCSE and for A-level at St Edward's College, and some choose to follow this into higher education, reading Music at university (including Oxbridge and Conservatoires, and often combined with choral scholarships). The feedback received is that their experiences as choristers was of great benefit preparing them for these chosen professional developments.

## **Where do the choristers sing?**

Boy and girl choristers have the privilege of singing in Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, a unique building with breathtaking architecture and a wonderful acoustic! In addition to this, the choir goes on tour, both nationally and internationally, and performs at concerts and sings services at churches and concert venues in the locality.

Recent foreign tours have included the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, USA, Canada and France. Local tours have included the Isle of Man, London, Birmingham, Dublin, Devon, Yorkshire and Worcester.

The choristers regularly broadcast on radio and television and record CDs that have received critical acclaim. In 2013, Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral treble Jack Topping became the youngest ever artist to sign a professional recording contract with DECCA records, releasing his debut CD *Wonderful World* to a worldwide audience.

Occasionally, the choristers perform with other notable musical groups such as the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Westminster Cathedral Choir and the City of London Sinfonia, and frequently collaborate with our sister cathedral, Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, at the opposite end of Hope Street.

## What are the costs involved?

The boys and girls receive daily musical tuition and direction from the cathedral music staff, but there are no costs payable to the cathedral for this tremendous musical training.

Chorister parents/carers are invited to make a monthly voluntary contribution (including Gift Aid if appropriate) to help support the musical life of the Metropolitan Cathedral.

## Does my child need to play a musical instrument?

Playing a musical instrument is hugely beneficial to choristers: it enables them to develop their musicianship and music reading skills and allows them to continue making music beyond their time as a chorister.

Many children who audition for choristership already play a musical instrument. Once accepted as a probationer, your child would be expected to have regular lessons in at least one instrument while they are a chorister.



## The spiritual development of a chorister family

Having a child in your family who is a chorister will affect the whole family. Regular attendance at cathedral liturgies will be expected of your family in order to support your child, and will enable the spiritual development of your family. Choristers assist in leading the prayer and worship of the cathedral on a daily basis, and soon learn the rhythms of the liturgical seasons and take a full part in the sacramental life of the cathedral.

Choristers will be prepared to make their First Confession and First Holy Communion by cathedral clergy and older choristers will be supported by the St Edward's College Chaplain as they prepare to receive Confirmation.

Cathedral clergy show a keen interest in the welfare and spiritual development of our choristers and their families in their role as choir chaplains.

A chorister is in a truly unique position in that they don't simply learn about the Church's liturgy, teaching and doctrine, but get to 'live' these essential elements of the Faith on a daily basis.





## The Cathedral's Choir Schools

### ***Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School***

In September 2020, Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School opened as a voluntary-aided state school, replacing the former provision on the same site: Runnymede St Edward's Preparatory School (formerly in the Independent Sector). It is located in Sandfield Park, West Derby.



Runnymede St Edward's is part of the Edmund Rice family of schools, and is the junior choir school to the Metropolitan Cathedral. Runnymede has a proven track record of academic, musical and sporting excellence, a fantastic range of facilities and extra-curricular activities, and a warm family atmosphere of openness and inclusivity.

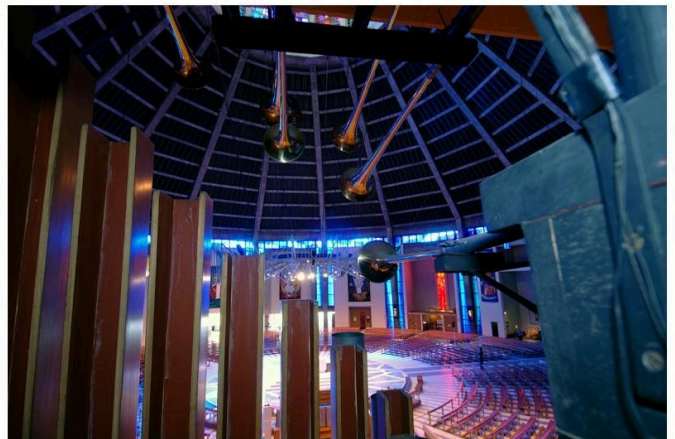
Since September 2020, Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School has been a preferred feeder school to St Edward's College.

### ***St Edward's College***



St Edward's College is a successful 11-18 Catholic co-educational school, also located in Sandfield Park, West Derby in Liverpool. It has been the senior choir school to the Metropolitan Cathedral since the 1970s, and will celebrate 50 years as the Cathedral Choir School in 2024. It has approximately 1100 pupils and 130 staff and is heavily oversubscribed, with several applications for every Year 7 place. Pupil attainment is very high with most pupils leaving the College bound for University.

The College has an enviable reputation for its academic achievement, its sporting success in many disciplines and the quality of its music education. The priorities of serving the community, demonstrating commitment, caring for others and striving for success, which underpin the education provided to all pupils, are based firmly on the values promoted by Blessed Edmund Rice, the founder of the Congregation of Christian Brothers and Father James Nugent who, in 1853, established the Catholic Institute in Liverpool, which later became St Edward's College.



*There is absolutely no doubt the experience [of being a chorister] made me the cricketer I became. We were expected to learn quickly about the power of concentration and performing under pressure ... there are parallels here with professional cricket ... you are expected to be a team player, to commit to a common creed of dedication and self-discipline. The world is often watching ... music was similar to cricket in that we were judged collectively, but vulnerable to individual error ...*

Sir Alastair Cook, Former England Cricket Captain

## **What do choristers go on to do in life?**

Many cathedral choristers go on to excel in life, reaching the highest rungs of their chosen profession, often due to the transferable skills learned during their days as a chorister. Upon finishing as a chorister, many former choristers join the Cathedral Youth Choir and take part in the musical ensembles at St Edward's College.

Former choristers of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral have gone on to be international vocal soloists, Olympic swimmers, barristers, head teachers, doctors and many other professions. Countless other adults vouch for the invaluable experience they had as choristers, and attribute their success to the transferable skills they learned and developed as choristers.

## **Is a chorister's life all work?**

No, not at all! Many choristers find that the friendships made during their time at the Cathedral last them for life. The choristers have games rooms at the cathedral with table tennis, recreation facilities, etc. Each year, the choristers compete against other cathedral choirs at football and rounders in addition to an active social calendar organised by the Choir Association.

## **How do we fit it all in?**

A chorister's life, and indeed a chorister's family life is a busy one! In order to reach, and maintain high standards, choristers sing on an almost daily basis during term time. This level of commitment is not for every child, or indeed for every family. However the return is great, with choristers frequently discovering that through their hard work and commitment, coupled with their training and talent, that they can achieve and experience standards beyond what you and they thought possible!

A chorister place at the cathedral does mean that other activities would need to be carefully fitted around choir commitments. We encourage our choristers to be well-rounded individuals, but ask that cathedral choir commitments are always prioritised. The cathedral is deeply appreciative of the goodwill and commitment of our chorister families, whose dedication enriches the wider life of the cathedral community.

## How do I know that my child's welfare will be taken seriously?

The choir schools and the cathedral work very closely each week, liaising over all matters concerning the choristers. Together, we seek to enable our choristers to flourish within a positive and nurturing environment.

The cathedral's Safeguarding Officer oversees all activities that take place at the cathedral involving young people, ensuring that a safe and welcoming environment is maintained. All adults involved in any way with the choir are required to first obtain a satisfactory Enhanced DBS clearance, and regular training is provided to them.

## How can I get involved as a parent?

Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral Choir Association financially supports the work of the cathedral choirs. Choir parents/carers and friends/family are invited to make a monthly voluntary contribution (including Gift Aid if appropriate) to help support the musical life of the Metropolitan Cathedral.

The Choir Association organises social events throughout the year to bring the wider choir family together. Recent such events have included a Race Night, Wine & Wisdom and Sponsored walks and bike rides.



## When do the choirs sing?

Both boy and girl choristers follow a weekly routine which, on occasion, is adapted due to special events such as broadcasts, Feast Days, concerts and tours. Calendars are issued on a termly basis in advance. The illustrations below show the routine a chorister with around 2+ years experience would follow. New choristers (which we call 'probationers') initially follow a reduced routine.

### ***Boys' usual weekly routine***

Monday:		<i>No rehearsals</i>
Tuesday:	07.50-08.35 16.00-17.45	Rehearsal (Runnymede) Rehearsal and Sung Mass (Cathedral) <i>Alternate weeks</i>
Wednesday:	07.50-08.35 15.30-16.15	Rehearsal (Runnymede) Junior choristers' rehearsal (Runnymede)
Thursday:	07.50-08.35 16.00-17.45	Rehearsal (Runnymede) Rehearsal and Sung Mass (Cathedral)
Friday:	07.50-08.35	Rehearsal (Runnymede)
Sunday:	09.30-15.45	Rehearsals, Mass and Choral Evening Prayer (Cathedral) <i>Sundays are generally alternate weeks with girl choristers</i>

### ***Girls' usual weekly routine***

Monday:		<i>No rehearsals</i>
Tuesday:	07.50-08.35 16.00-17.45	Rehearsal (St Edward's College) Rehearsal and Sung Mass (Cathedral) <i>Alternate weeks</i>
Wednesday:	07.50-08.35 16.00-17.45	Rehearsal (St Edward's College) Rehearsal and Sung Mass (Cathedral)
Thursday:	07.50-08.35 15.30-16.15	Rehearsal (St Edward's College) Junior choristers' rehearsal (St Edward's College)
Friday:	07.50-08.35	Rehearsal (St Edward's College)
Sunday:	09.30-15.45	Rehearsals, Mass and Choral Evening Prayer (Cathedral) <i>Sundays are generally alternate weeks with boy choristers</i>

## What choristers and their parents say ...

*Being in the choir has been a fabulous opportunity for me. In my time in the choir so far I have sung on TV and radio, travelled to Germany, Ireland and Italy, sung for the Pope and recorded three CDs. But most of all, I am privileged to sing in our beautiful cathedral several times a week.*

Girl chorister, aged 15

*My son has learnt so much from his time in the choir. Despite the long hours and hard work he is happy, and in fact better organised and equipped to manage his daily workload. The welcome we received from the choir family when he joined was wonderful and really helped us to feel at home in the cathedral.*

Boy chorister parent

*Looking back, my years in the choir taught me so much. I had my first exposure to multiple languages, I learnt to multitask, and tried my very hardest every day, even from a young age. My time as a chorister is a cherished memory, and something that has formed me today as an adult.*

Former chorister

*I love being in choir. We get to sing together every day, play football and table tennis and go away on trips!*

Boy chorister, aged 10



## KEY INFORMATION & DATES FOR RECRUITMENT

### Available places

The following places are available to begin in the choir in September 2024:

- For pupils currently attending any school other than Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Current year group	BOYS available places	GIRLS available places	Notes
Yr 2	6 places		<i>to start in Runnymede in September 2024 in Yr 3</i>
Yr 5	0	6 places	<i>to start in the choir in September 2024 in Yr 6, but to remain in their current primary school, before taking up a place in St Edward's College in September 2025</i>

- For pupils currently at Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Current year group	BOYS available places	GIRLS available places
Yr 2	4 places	
Yr 3	4 places	
Yr 4	0	0
Yr 5	0	2 places

### Registration

Registration is required for all elements of the chorister recruitment journey. Either scan the QR code below or visit [www.liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk/music/joining-the-choirs](http://www.liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk/music/joining-the-choirs) to register.



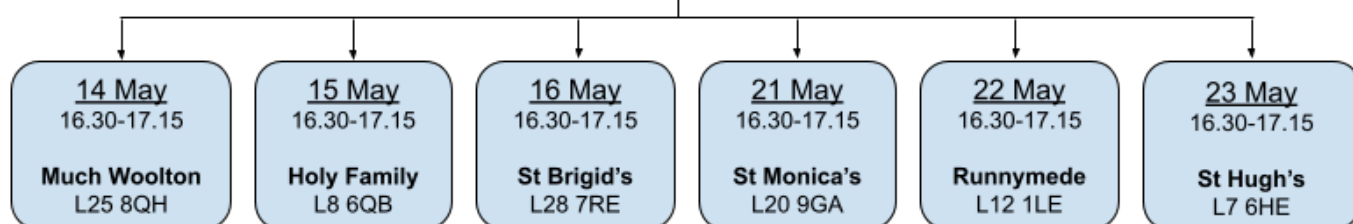
# CHORISTER RECRUITMENT JOURNEY 2024



Register your child to participate in their **Chorister Recruitment Journey**

[www.liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk/music/joining-the-choirs/](http://www.liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk/music/joining-the-choirs/)

Attend a **Chorister Experience Session** in your area



Come along and be a **Chorister for a Day** at the Metropolitan Cathedral

Sunday 9 June  
13.15-15.45

Participate in an **Initial Voice Trial**

Boys & Girls in year 2  
*12/13 June*  
**Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School, L12 1LE**

Girls in year 5  
*11 June*  
**Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, L3 5TQ**

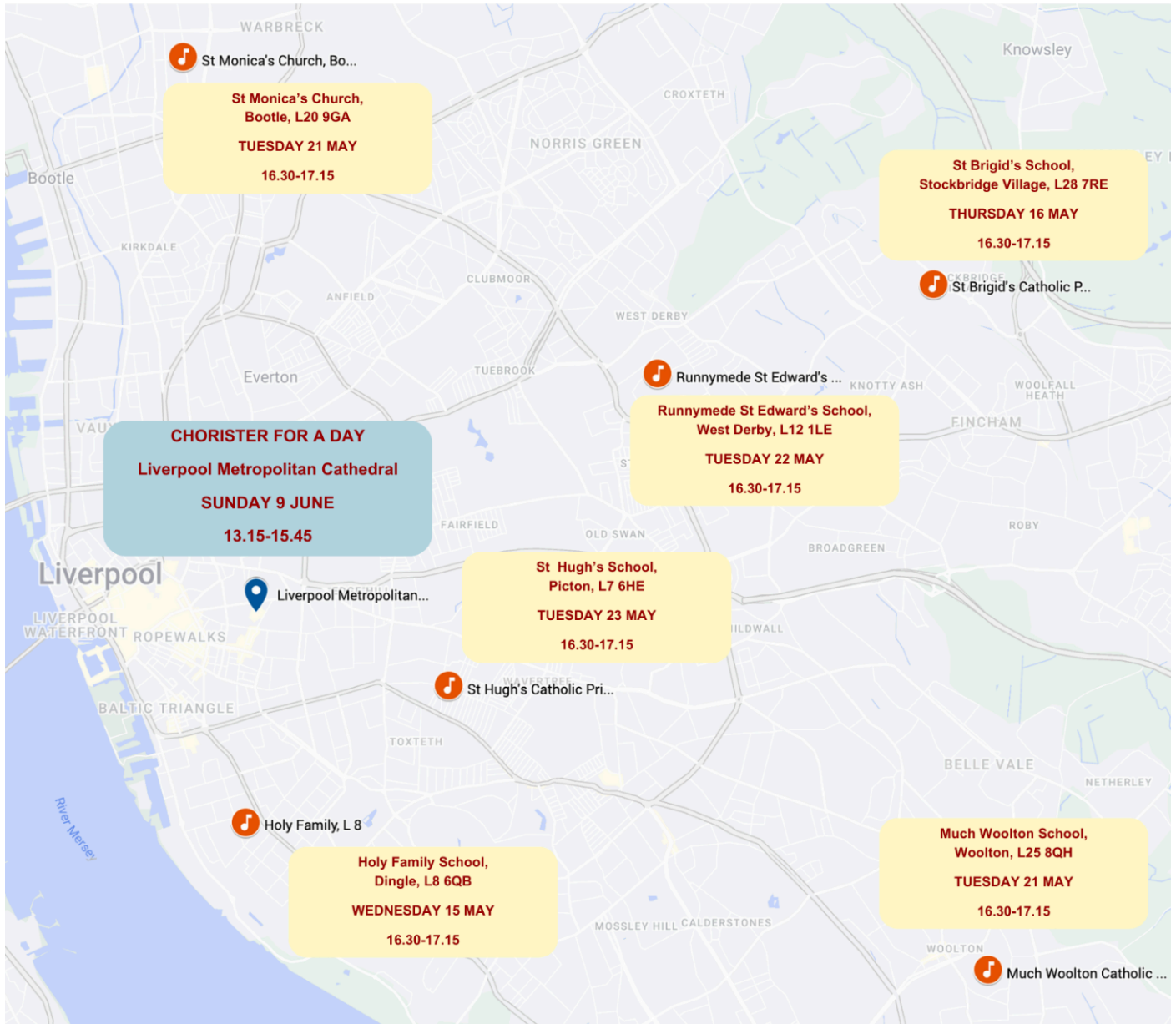
Receive an invitation to attend the **Final Selection Morning**

Saturday 15 June  
9.00-10.00



# CHORISTER EXPERIENCE SESSIONS 2024

- Open to BOYS and GIRLS in year 2/ GIRLS in year 5
- Have fun learning vocal & aural skills and meeting new friends
- Come to a session in your area



**Tuesday 14 May, 16.30-17.15: Much Woolton, L25 8QH**

**Wednesday 15 May, 16.30-17.15: Holy Family School, L8 6QB**

**Thursday 16 May, 16.30-17.15: St Brigid's School, L28 7RE**

**Tuesday 21 May, 16.30-17.15: St Monica's Church, L20 9GA**

**Wednesday 22 May, 16.30-17.15: Runnymede St Edwards, L12 1LE**

**Thursday 23 May, 16.30-17.15: St Hugh's, L7 6HE**

## BE A CHORISTER FOR A DAY

Sunday 9 June 2024, 13.15-15.45

Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, L3 5TQ

Continue your chorister recruitment journey by coming to sing in our amazing cathedral!

- Open to all children considering auditioning for the cathedral choir
- Meet and sing with the cathedral choristers in a cathedral liturgy
- Have a tour of the cathedral, and experience the cathedral organ close up
- Learn more about choir life



## VOICE TRIALS (AUDITIONS)

### Boys & girls currently in Yr 2

**Venue:** Runnymede St Edward's Primary School, North Drive, Liverpool L12 1LE

**Dates:** Wednesday 12/Thursday 13 June (initial voice trial)

### Girls currently in Yr 5

**Venue:** Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, Mount Pleasant, L3 5TQ

**Date:** Tuesday 11 June (initial voice trial)

Initial voice trials (the auditions for entry into the Cathedral Choir) take place in person at either Runnymede St Edward's Primary School (boys and girls in Yr 2) or at the cathedral (girls in Yr 5).

Your child will be asked to

- sing a piece of their choice (a hymn, song, or even 'Happy Birthday' would be great)
- perform on a musical instrument (if they play one)
- do some vocal and aural tests.

Feedback will be given to all candidates who participate in an initial voice trial, offering parents/carers their child's score and ranking order. No further feedback will be given, or correspondence entered into.

Invitations will be issued to those who score highly in the initial voice trial to attend a final selection morning on Saturday 15 June at 9.00.

Choristers are selected on the basis of their musical aptitude as displayed during the selection process. Candidates are marked on their musical aptitude in rhythm, pitch and vocal/instrumental ability. Each candidate receives the same test, and marks are given in each section. The selection process is assessed by members of the cathedral music department and moderated by an external assessor. The decision of the Cathedral in the selection of choristers is final and feedback will only be given as outlined above.

As part of the final selection morning, parents/carers will have the opportunity to learn more about chorister life. Before being offered a place, a reference will be taken from the child's current headteacher to ascertain their suitability for choristership.

Please note all applicants **must** be in a position to satisfy the admission of both choir schools, specifically, all choristers must be baptised Roman Catholics, or have been received into full communion with the Catholic Church (if originally baptised in a different Christian denomination).

[Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School admissions](#)

[St Edward's College admissions](#)

**To register your child for their chorister recruitment journey, please complete the electronic application form at the [cathedral website](#). All places **must** be booked in advance and spaces are available on a first come, first served basis.**

**For further information, please contact:**

**Jacqueline Larrosa**  
*Music Administrator*



**Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral**  
**Mount Pleasant**  
**Liverpool L3 5TQ**



**0151 708 7283**



**[music@metcathedral.org.uk](mailto:music@metcathedral.org.uk)**

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**Further information and application forms available at:**



**[www.liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk/music/joining-the-choirs](http://www.liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk/music/joining-the-choirs)**



*v 13, March 2024*